



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, August 14, 2007

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New Energy Division Active at Commerce

*Energy Infrastructure Promotion and Development Division to Create Jobs;
Encourage Clean, Green Energy Production*

(HELENA) – In a continuing effort to promote energy development and bring new jobs to Montana, the Department of Commerce has created a new division to specifically focus on Energy Infrastructure Promotion and Development. The division was approved by Montana's 60th Legislature during the 2007 session.

"Montana's on the move," said Governor Brian Schweitzer. "We have increased our oil production nearly 50% in the past two years." In 2004 Montana produced 24,711,630 barrels of oil and in 2006 Montana produced 50% more at 36,215,772 barrels of oil.

In Montana, electrical generation capacity has increased by over 300 mega-watts since 2004, more new capacity than the previous 16 years combined.

The division's goals and objectives center around promoting and developing additional energy distribution capacity so that potential jobs can become actual jobs, thereby enhancing Montana's tax base for the benefit of its citizens.

"One of Montana's most exciting economic growth potentials is energy development," said Governor Schweitzer. "Our world class energy resources are second to none in the United States and provide us with the opportunity to help the nation to wean itself from foreign oil while creating economic growth opportunities in the most distressed areas of our state."

“Montana has been a national leader in addressing our energy needs,” said Department of Commerce Director Anthony Preite. “The creation of this division will help ensure that we work to make clean, green energy a reality in Montana.”

The program is currently working on several development projects that will enhance Montana’s commitment to generating clean, green energy from wind, coal, and biomass—all found in abundance in Central and Eastern Montana, areas where high paying jobs are in demand.

“This new energy division will aggressively pursue opportunities to obtain leveraged resources to ensure Montana achieves the biggest bang for the buck,” said Governor Schweitzer. “I am confident that combined resources will result in an accelerated production of our energy assets.”

While a number of U.S. states are looking into environmentally responsible energy development, Montana has been on the forefront of the discussion, in part with Governor Schweitzer’s support of the national “25x25” initiative, a grassroots effort encouraging 25% of all U.S. energy to be created from renewable resources by the year 2025. In an effort to help stop the effects of global climate change, Schweitzer was the first governor to give his endorsement to the proposal.

Increasing political tensions in oil producing nations have given Americans cause to look toward homegrown energy supplies. “Montana’s wealth of energy resources gives us a great advantage to help break our addiction to foreign oil,” said Governor Schweitzer. “We can provide a good share of the energy resources America needs, while still protecting the natural resources Montanans treasure.”

The EIPD was created by the 2007 Special Legislative Session as a result of Governor Schweitzer’s commitment to clean, green energy development and will consist of five full time employees.

For more information on energy development in Montana visit: www.business.mt.gov and www.commerce.mt.gov

HB 3 Energy Incentives Legislation:

[http://laws.leg.mt.gov/pls/laws0507/LAW0210W\\$BSIV.ActionQuery?P_BILL_NO1=3&P_BLTP_BILL_TYP_CD=HB&Z_ACTION=Find](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/pls/laws0507/LAW0210W$BSIV.ActionQuery?P_BILL_NO1=3&P_BLTP_BILL_TYP_CD=HB&Z_ACTION=Find)

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